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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8527
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEHJA/ISLAMIC CONFERENCE COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9817
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3207
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0984
RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY 0108
RHJMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 010039

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TAGS: PTER PGOV PINR KDEM KISL ASEC ID IZ

SUBJECT: GOI ACTIVELY WORKING TO COUNTER JIHAD CALLS

REF: JAKARTA 09862 (CRISIS MOBILIZING INDONESIA'S

MUSLIMS)

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Classified By: Classified by Political Officer Eric W. Kneedler, Reason 1.4 (d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) The Indonesian government, led by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY), has responded to public clamoring for jihad on the part of militant groups by urging the Indonesian public to respond realistically and rationally to events in the Middle East. Following a cabinet discussion of how to keep popular reaction under control, the President, Defense Minister Juwono Sudarsono, the National Police and the speaker of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR) Agung Laksono, have actively discouraged potential jihadists from traveling to the Middle East and called for restraint in the face of growing public concern with the images coming from Lebanon, and increasingly militant statements on the part of some of Indonesia's more hardline Islamic groups. The National Police Spokesman, Brigadier General Anton Bachrul Alam, took it one step further on August 8, declaring to the press that the police would prevent jihadists from departing for the Middle East, though he failed to clarify what legal basis might allow the police to do so. The GOI's response has not been uniformly perfect, with the Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs Adhyaksa Dault's declaration of intent to accompany jihad volunteers to Lebanon and Palestine the most notable exception, but on balance the GOI has struck a chord of moderation and thus far resisted the temptation to exploit the issue for political purposes. End Summary.

SBY CALLS FOR A PRODUCTIVE RESPONSE TO MIDDLE EAST EVENTS

¶2. (C) Ref A reported on the outpouring of support in Indonesia for the plight of Muslims in both Lebanon and Palestine, as well as the one-sided nature of Indonesian press coverage of events in the Middle East. The issue has tremendous political traction in Indonesia, and a number of radical Islamic groups, including the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir's radical Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI), have seized upon the issue and inserted

themselves into the headlines by issuing calls for jihad.

¶13. (C) President Yudhoyono has responded to press reports about militant groups allegedly mobilizing for jihad in the Middle East by taking control of the public debate on the issue. SBY publicly expressed his understanding for the popular anger over Israel's actions in Lebanon, but called on the Indonesian public to channel its emotions and anger in a constructive direction. The President stated the GOI would work to help craft a solution to the crisis and noted the Indonesian military (TNI) had begun to mobilize an Indonesian peace-keeping battalion that could be dispatched to the Middle East as soon as a solution was implemented. According to a report in the August 6 version of the newspaper Kompas, SBY said &I can understand the anger, annoyance, and emotion of the Indonesian people for the misery suffered by the Lebanese people. I appreciate the people who have collected donations to be channeled to Lebanon to alleviate people's misery there. However, beyond that, the people should be in line with the government to seek a war settlement in Lebanon.⁸

¶14. (C) Privately the President,s advisors have been receptive to our demarches on the issue and expressed confidence in the GOI,s ability to reign in potential jihadists. It would seem clear that SBY has no intention of allowing Indonesian radicals to gain combat experience and training in the Middle East.

MIXED MESSAGES FROM OTHER POLITICAL LEADERS

¶15. (C) DPR Speaker Agung Laksono, usually eager to brandish his Islamist credentials in order to counteract the political liability of having a Christian wife, reinforced SBY,s anti-jihadist message. On August 3 Speaker Laksono made a

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public plea for restraint, urging Islamic organizations to discourage members from carrying out jihad and asking them to instead focus their energies on supplying the people of Palestine and Lebanon with medicine and other humanitarian assistance.

¶16. (S) On the opposite side of the spectrum, Cabinet Minister and PKS member Adhyaksa Dault delivered red meat to an audience of FPI members on August 1, declaring his readiness to escort jihad volunteers to Lebanon and Palestine if necessary. Our contacts tell us Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs Widodo upbraided Dault for his comments the same day, and Dault accompanied SBY to Kuala Lumpur for an extraordinary meeting of the OIC on August 3, most likely to keep him out of circulation.

¶17. (C) According to press reports, on August 7 Foreign Minister Wirajuda told reporters Indonesia is &unable to stop people from going to Lebanon⁸ and noted there was an increasing number of militant groups recruiting volunteers for service in Lebanon. Foreign Ministry spokesman Desra Percaya made a similar statement on August 4. On the other hand, police contacts have told us the Director of Intelligence, immigration authorities and the Foreign Affairs Ministry are collectively trying to identify and interdict potential jihadist travelers, and that they apparently are focusing on the Asian Muslim Youth Movement (AMYM), in particular.

POLICE AND MILITARY SAYING THE RIGHT THINGS

¶18. (C) GOI police and military officials have taken a strong stance against would-be jihadists and have worked from the outset to dissuade Indonesians from traveling to the Middle East to fight against Israel. National Police Spokesman

Anton Bachrul Alam said that such travel was banned and warned the police would prevent potential jihadists from leaving the country. In August 7 comments to the press, Bachrul added the police would conduct surveillance on military groups suspected of planning jihad missions and share names of potential jihadists with immigration officials.

¶9. (C) On August 7 Indonesian Defense Forces (TNI) Commander Djoko Suyanto added his voice to the rising chorus of GOI officials discouraging potential jihadists, emphasizing to the press the TNI could not guarantee the safety of civilians planning to travel to Lebanon for the purposes of jihad. The TNI also held meetings with police in Pontianak, West Kalimantan, where Suaib Didu, leader of a group of 200 volunteers said to be preparing to go to the Middle East, was recently interrogated by police. Didu was subsequently released. Didu's group has been referred to by several names in the press, including AMYM and the Jihad Bomb Force (PBJ).

COMMENT

¶10. (C) SBY and the security forces of the GOI appear to be doing everything in their power to prevent Indonesia from becoming an exporter of jihadists. The key question remains not whether the GOI has the appetite to deter potential jihadists, but whether it has the resources and legal basis to do so.

PASCOE